(c) whether Government are also considering allowing investors to develop Real estate along Highways?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKAT-RAMAN): (a) The proposal is under consideration.

(b) National Highways Act, 1956 has already been amended for this purpose.

(c) Yes, Sir.

Recommendations of the National Human Rights Commission on Indian Prison Act

1075. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Human Rights Commission has urged Government to make changes in the provisions of the Indian Prison Act, 1894;

(b) if so, whether a Bill has been prepared in this regard and submitted to the Union Government; and

(c) if so, the reactions of the Union Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR): (a) to (c) The Government and National Human Rights Commission are interacting on the possible content of a Bill to cover changes on various aspects of the prison administration.

Violence in Bihar During Lok Sabha Elections

1076. SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA:
SHRI RAJ NATO SINGH:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons killed/injured during the recent Lok Sabha elections held in the State of Bihar; and

(b) whether Government have taken the matter seriously; and if so, the action taken in this regard and the number of persons arrested during these elections?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR): (a) and (b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Crisis in Jute Industry

1077. SHRI JOYANTA ROY: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the jute industry in the country has fallen in deep crisis in recent days; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) and (b) Out of 73 jute mills in the country 17 mills were lying closed as on 15.7.96. Among the various factors contributing to the closure or sickness in jute units are lack of modernisation, imbalance in cost price structure, inadequate availability and high price of row jute, stiff competition from cheaper synthetic substitutes in packaging sector etc.

सशस्त्र बल (विशेष शक्तियां) अधिनियम

1078. श्री गोपाल सिंह जी. सोलंकी: क्या गृह मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) वर्तमान में सशस्त्र बल (विशेष शक्तियां) अधिनियम किन-किन राज्यों में लागू है;

(ख) राज्य-वार यह अधिनियम किस तारीख से पहली बार प्रभावी हुआ था;

(ग) इसे बरकरार रखने के क्या कारण हैं;

(घ) क्या इस अधिनियम की कभी समीक्षा की गई है; और

(ङ) यदि हां, तो राज्य-वार अंतिम बार इसकी समीक्षा कब गई है/थी?

गृह मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री मोहम्मद मकबूल डार): (क) सशस्त्र बल (विशेष शक्तियां) अधिनियम, इस समय निम्नलिखित राज्यों में प्रख्यापित है:-

1. असम	2. नागालैण्ड
3. मणिपुर	4. मिजोरम
5. मेघालय	6. अरुणाचल प्रदेश
7. त्रिपुरा	8. पंजाब
9. सं.शा. क्षेत्र चण्डीगढ़	10. जम्मू व कश्मीर

(ख) उपलब्ध सूचना के अनुसार, प्रत्येक राज्य के सामने दर्शाई गई तिथि से अधिनियम लागू है:—

1. असम	27 नवम्बर, 1990 से
2. नागालैण्ड	07 अप्रैल, 1995 से
3. मणिपुर	28 सितम्बर, 1970 से
4. अरुणाचल प्रदेश	17 सितम्बर, 1991 से
5. पंजाब	15 अक्तूबर, 1983 से
6. चंडीगढ़ (संघ शासित क्षेत्र)	15 अक्तूबर, 1983 से
7. जम्मू व कश्मीर	5 जुलाई, 1990 से

(ग) से (ङ) इन राज्यों में उग्रवाद और अलगाववादी गतिविधियों को काबू करने के लिए अधिनियम को जारी रखना आवश्यक समझा गया। उक्त प्रावधान को जारी रखने का निर्णय करने के लिए स्थिति पर सतत् निगरानी रखी जाती है और समीक्षा की जाती है। इस समय की वास्तविक स्थिति, अधिनियम में निहित शक्तियों को वापस लेना, न्याय संगत सिद्ध नहीं करती।

India's Membership in APEC

1079. MAULANA OBAIDULLAH KHAN AZMI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the efforts being made by India for the membership of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC); and

(b) the response of APEC in regard to India's membership?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJARAL): (a) India has formally conveyed to members of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) its interest in associating with APEC and participating in its activities.

(b) The APEC Ministerial Meeting held in Seattle in November 1993, took a decision to impose a moratorium for three years on admission of additional members into APEC. In view of this decision, the question of admission of India and other new members does not arise at this stage. Meanwhile, India is pursuing participation in three APEC Working Groups, viz., Trade Promotion, Industrial Science & Technology and Regional Energy Cooperation

Construction of Flyovers/over bridges on Major Road and Railway Crossings

1080. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to construct flyovers or overbridges on major road crossing and railway level crossing in the Metropolitans and other Urban areas for free flow of traffic and for saving precious petroleum products; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) and (b) Consti-tutionally, Central Government is responsible for development and maintenance of National Highways. All roads other than National Highways and the Road Over Bridges thereon fall within the purview of the State Government These also include roads within Metropolitan and Urban areas. As far as National Highways are concerned, ROBs are constructed depending upon road and rail traffic and subject to availability of funds.

Excess Billing of Telephone Bills in Jhangbirpur Exchange of Darbhanga Division

1081. SHRI RAM DEO BHANDARI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the complaints of telephone bills in Jhanghirpur Exchange of Darbhanga Division during the year 1995-96 and 1996-97 upto date;

(b) whether any Member of Parliament has complained about the excess billing of telephone;

(c) if so, the reasons of the excess billing;

(d) the number of complaints disposed off; and

(e) the measures are being taken to reduce the cases of excess billing?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA). (a) The number of complaints for telephone